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WHAT IS CRACK

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WHAT IS COCAINE?

In order to understand what is "crack", it is necessary to first understand what is Cocaine, and what is Cocaine Free-base.

Cocaine is a drug derived from the leaves of the Coca bush, which grows in the Andies mountains of South America. Over two-hundred (200) pounds of Coca leaves are required to produce around two (2) pounds of pure Cocaine. Following Cocaine's administration into the human body, it becomes a central nervous system stimulant. Cocaine's duration of onset, length of mood-altered effect, and peak of performance, is dependent upon the quality of the Cocaine being ingested. The quality of the Cocaine within the Cook County, Chicago Metropolitan Area, is between thirty percent (30%) for the average street gram to ninety-nine percent (99%) for the kilogram (2.2 pounds). Quantities between vary in quality depending upon amount and price of purchase, as well as closeness to the ultimate source. The remaining portion, of what one has purchased as Cocaine, is the "cut" made up of various forms of diluents and adulterants.

Cocaine is introduced into the system through several different forms. It's most popular route is by snorting it into the nose. It may also be smoked, injected by hypodermic needles, and eaten.

Cocaine is a white crystal-like powder. However, it can take on other appearances, such as a white crystal rock formation. The white crystal rock formation occurs naturally after the Cocaine has been cut from a kilogram block. The rock formation may also be the result of street Cocaine being "re-rocked".

Cocaine may also be found in cream-colored chunks.

The effect of Cocaine is twofold. First, it is a local anesthetic which will numb the area it is applied to. Normally the area is the mucus membranes of the nose, mouth and eyes. Secondly, as we previously mentioned it is a central nervous system stimulant and quite possibly, the most potent of all stimulants known to man.

The feeling of stimulation derived from the Cocaine, following its administration, is called a "rush". The drug effects a chemical in the brain called Dopamine. Dopamine controls our alertness and pleasure senses. Therefore, the body responds to the drug with a heightened alertness and with pleasure such as the pleasure derived from sex, food, and feeling of superiority.

Following regular use, the user experiences insomnia, increased heart-rate and blood pressure, rapid breathing, constriction of arteries, especially those around the heart, tremors, fatigue, headache, fever, twitching, blurred vision, weight loss, constipation, cold sweats and seizures. Psychologically, the experience is of poor concentration, withdrawal from normal activities, superior attitude, depression, anxiety and paranoia.

WHAT IS FREE-BASE?

Free-base is the term used to describe the process whereby the adulterants and diluents (also referred to as "cut" on the street) are removed from the street Cocaine. Remaining, after this process, is nearly one-hundred percent (100%) pure Cocaine. Free-base is also the term used when referring to the

finished product, or the nearly 100% pure Cocaine, resulting from the basing process.

The two (2) most common forms used in the free-base process, or that process which removes the cuts from street Cocaine, are ether and baking soda. Both of these processes, especially Ether, if not carefully performed under proper conditions can be very dangerous.

After the cuts have been removed, a very small amount of the pure Cocaine is placed into a pipe. Any type of pipe may be utilized, however, a small water pipe is customarily used, containing alcohol, rather than water. A match, lighter, or torch is then used to burn the Cocaine within the pipe. The individual using will take one (1) drag from the pipe, inhaling the vapor and within seconds, Cocaine's stimulant high will take effect. This stimulation will last approximately ten (10) to twenty (20) minutes.

Free-based Cocaine appears as a white crystal powder or a cream-colored, sometimes wet, chunk. Synonymous with ether and baking soda, respectively. The chunks, or rock-type form, are usually small, 1/8th to 1/4 inch in diameter. Packaging varies, however, small tinfoil packets are most common.

The advantages, to the user, of ingesting Free-based Cocaine verses street Cocaine, is simply a quicker and more intense high. Duration of onset is faster if Cocaine is administered in a pure form through the lungs, rather than mixed with cut through the membranes of the nose. Intensity of the high is also greater, through Free-basing, due to the pure drug being ingested and reacting so quickly with the body via its direct route of ingestion. Intravenous injection of pure Cocaine will give the user nearly the same intensity high as smoking pure Cocaine. However, smoking is preferred because

needles leave marks and most Cocaine users don't like to inject themselves.

Cocaine must be converted to its pure form before it can be smoked. Pure Cocaine burns clean and clear, appearing like water, making it easy to smoke. Street Cocaine burns black and brown color, like tar, due to the cuts it contains and is difficult to smoke. Conversely, pure Cocaine cannot be snorted. The pure Cocaine substance is very sharp and if snorted will cut the nose membrane causing severe bleeding. A good analogy would be like snorting ground glass.

WHAT IS CRACK?

Crack equals Free-based Cocaine. Crack is sometimes also now referred to as rock Cocaine. The same pure form of Cocaine coming through the basing process, that has been termed "Free-based" for the last ten (10) years or more, obtained its new name "Crack" a few years ago by street dealers.

Street dealers coined the word "Crack" as a marketing term when referring to the small quantity sales of twenty-five (25), twenty (20), fifteen (15), ten (10) and even five (5) dollar packets of Free-based Cocaine they were selling.

Prior to the marketing term "Crack", Cocaine was generally purchased for between $300.00 and $1,000.00, or more, by the individual user or users. These individual users, seeking a more intense high, learned how to extract the pure Cocaine from the street Cocaine through the Free-basing process. Following the basing process, the buyer would then use the Free-base for himself or with his friends.

The abuse was traditionally limited to two (2) types of abusers; those who could afford large amounts of Cocaine, since some volume was lost through the Free-base process, and those who knew how to convert the drug to pure.

Then, a few years ago, street drug dealers discovered how to Free-base. They purchased the Cocaine in larger amounts, converted it into Free-base, and then broke the Free-base into very small chunks. The result was "Crack"; Free-base Cocaine for sale at affordable prices for all.

Now the intense high of pure, smokable Cocaine was not only available to the wealthy, but now also became affordable for the poor and more notably, the children of our country.

Crack is also more notably associated with Cocaine that has been Free-based through the use of baking soda (this is because the baking soda process is less expensive and requires no special equipment) and it is generally sold via slot house operations in poor urban areas.

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